

The Indian Drama

Mathew.

In no other form has Sanskrit literature attained as much excellence as in the drama. In the epics, it is grand, noble and majestic; in the lyrics, it is melodious, enchanting and soothing; but in the drama, it speaks to the heart, it elevates man's thoughts and sentiments, it purifies his instinctive tendencies. And why this superior excellence? Is it because man's life is most vividly represented on the stage, because the theme is nearer to actuality, because the sentiments expressed are more personal? Or, is it because it is Indian drama and not Sanskrit drama, that is, the language used is not throughout the classical Sanskrit of the priests and ^{the} most learned, but also in many places the ordinary spoken language of the common people? I think, the reason is farther to seek. The Sanskrit drama, or more truly, the Indian drama was not the sole possession invention of some prejudiced, though cultured, Brahmin; it was not the sole possession of a learned few. It belonged to the people as ^{truly as} did their ~~very~~ religion; its first actors were their priests, it ^{had} sprung from their religious ceremonies. Unlike other forms of literature, if a drama ~~had~~ ^{was} to be successful, it had to please not the king or the patron under whose tutelage it was written, but the people before whom it was staged. This universal character of the Indian drama a

Consequent excellence is best seen from a study of the growth of the drama.

The first beginnings of the ^{Indian} Sanskrit drama can be traced as far back as the Vedic period. The Vedas mention several rites and ceremonies very similar to the dramatic art which was to come into existence later on. Some pressing necessity or the need of some singular favour, an ablution or an incantation, a thanksgiving or a propitiation would gather together the priests and the people; then, according to the minute ritualistic directions of the Vedas, the priests would separate into two or more parties; the ceremony ^{would} ~~was~~ then ^{be} conducted with many pantomimic performances accompanied by dance and singing. When the people dispersed, there ~~was~~ ^{was} created in the minds a strong attraction for all these dances, songs and dramatic symbolisms. We may observe here that about 20 centuries later, there was a like attraction ⁱⁿ the medieval mind for the beautiful ritual of the Church - an attraction which ^{gave rise to} ~~developed on~~ the English drama, and ^{in course of time produced} ~~gave to~~ William Shakespeare. So too, the attraction felt in the Vedic times developed ^{into} the Indian drama and gave ~~to~~ us a like genius, Kalidasa.

Centuries passed on with nothing more than this monotonous recurrence of the ritual to the satisfy the mental craving for dramatic representation. At last the age of the epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana, came to show a new mode of dramatisation.

Groups of young men ^{would} ~~would~~ gather together and study with infinite pains the long epics, each selecting for himself one or more parts. When fully prepared they ^{would} ~~would~~ go from place to place and act the story in some palace or mansion at the request of some princes and rich land-lords. These recitations though lasting for more than thirty or forty long nights, were attended by immense crowds gathered from ^{the} ~~the~~ neighbouring districts. The very outlook of the country was changing along with the changing emotions of the reciters - when Rama's exile was being recited signs of mourning were seen on every face and in every street; when the battles were over and Rama was victorious, the faces were once more lit up, every house and shop began to show signs of joy, the streets were all decorated with garlands as though to give a triumph to Rama. The epic recitations belonged to the people in a particular way and its success was measured by the pleasure it gave to the people. At the same time, we see in it a further advancement towards the perfect drama. The pantomimic shows were replaced by dialogues, discussions and battles; the music was more refined; the dances lasted for a longer time; there was a plot to keep up the interest of the people; and the intense religious character of the ritual was absent. Scrupulosity and rigorism of had no place here, there was no fear of want of respect for the gods, and therefore greater freedom of action was allowed. ^{The performance} ~~had~~ possessed almost ^{all the} ~~every~~ characteristics of the drama.

Learned Brahmins, who devoted themselves to literature living under the tutelage of kings, now began

to think of a form of writing that would appeal ^{more} to the people ~~more~~. They chose short and interesting episodes from the epics, embellished ~~ed~~ them with new incidents and characters, and wrote the first dramas. These were received as a very welcome change. The isolated stories did not tax the patience of the audience like the long epics. The emotions had a freer play, human passions were more graphically displayed, the plot was better worked out, music and dancing were more perfect, and all the actors were given long careful training. The language used was not all through the pure Classical Sanskrit; all the inferior characters - ambassadors, officials, soldiers, servants and all females - were made to speak in the vernacular of the place they came from.

With ^{rapid} strides the new drama began to make progress until ^{in the fourth century} it reached its summit in the fourth century in Kalidasa. It is in his Sakuntala that we find summed up together all the perfections foreshadowed ten centuries earlier by the Vedic ritual. It is his Sakuntala which when presented to the Western World in 1789 through a translation by Dr. William Jones, attracted groups of admiring scholars to Sanskrit, literature, and which elicited such warm praise from Herder and Goethe. And why this great success? Because Kalidasa profited most by the experience of the ten earlier centuries. Popular feelings had been carefully studied by every great writer, every one had expressed his thoughts in the

It Thus, setting aside traditions which are incredible to the modern ear, and which have been proved to be the creation of a later age, disproving flippant arguments based on a possible but improbable concurrence of events, and rejecting certain facts which are almost groundless when compared with stronger evidence, most critics have come to accept the time of Chandragupta II as the real date of Kalidasa. He was a contemporary neither of Vasudharmān nor of Varāhamihira; he did not live to see the glories of the Hūnas in the Oxus valley or in Kashmir; he was not a friend of King Kumāradatta, nor an enemy of the logician Dignāga; He had not for his royal patron ~~either~~ King Vikramāditya of the first century B.C. nor King Dhāra of the eleventh century A.D. If the many incredible stories related about him are nothing more than stories, if the fables handed down by tradition are nothing more than the pious creation of later ^{years} ~~ages~~, if the total ignorance of his life is only because India had not then that appreciation of history as it has now, if his deep learning is, ^{what it is,} because he did learn as any other Brahmin student of his age, if, in fine, he can be proved to have lived in a fixed age, towards the end of the fourth century A.D., and be the beginning of the fifth, there is no reason why Kalidasa should not be as historical as any other person in the world's history.

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The date arrived at from the poet's knowledge of astronomy is supported by many more proofs from his works and contemporary history. A panegyric known as the Mandasor Prasasti written in 473 A. D. mentions two of Kalidasa's well known works, Raghuvamśa and Meghadūta. Besides, the calm contentment which pervades all his works, which can be caused only by a peaceful reign, the true classical Sanskrit which he has used, his deep knowledge of all the sciences—even astronomy and Kāmasāstra, which a Brahmin student of the Gupta era could learn, are further proofs of the same date. That he insists very much on a horse-sacrifice in his first drama Mālevikāgnimitra might be because the deep impression made by the horse-sacrifice of King Samudragupta was still fresh in the minds of the poet and his readers. Samudragupta's successor was Chandragupta II, surnamed Vikramāditya. The surname perhaps gave rise to the tradition of 'Vikramāditya and the nine jewels'. This seems to suggest that Kālidāsa lived in the time of Chandragupta II. That the title of his second drama Vikramorvaśī (Vikram^{ma} + urvaśī) is similar to the surname of the king (Vikrama + āditya), and also that his famous 'Kumārasambhava' has for its title the name of Chandragupta's son and successor Kumāragupta, are further proofs for this date. Therefore it is to be concluded that Chandras Kālidāsa lived in the time of Chandragupta Vikramāditya who ruled over Ujjayini between 380 and 413 A. D.

Is Kālidāsa a myth?

If there is any poet in Indian literature whose ~~real~~ representations of the human passions of love and of hate are second to none in the world's classics, whose sense of pathos and horror melts the hardest hearts, whose comic and heroic passages are enjoyed even by the illiterate, whose calm flow in lyric and gnomic verse is the chief attraction to the foreign scholars of Sanskrit, it is Kālidāsa, the greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist. But the many incredible stories related about him, the fables handed down by tradition, the almost ~~total~~ total ignorance of his life, the great learning he clearly manifests in all his works, and, above all, the seemingly irreconcilable views about his date, have led some German and English critics to call in question the very fact of his existence. But, on the other hand these very same ^{reasons} ~~motives~~ have led many scholars to believe in his historicity, and to attribute those most erudite and masterly works of Indian literature to Kālidāsa and to no one else. These latter support their conclusion mostly by showing that the views about his date are not altogether irreconcilable, and by proving that he belongs to that date which is now commonly accepted by many ^{scholars} ~~scholars~~.

him. Establishing the real date, the most
argument to show the historicity of any person, is
absolutely necessary in the case of Kālidāsa since the
views about his date are so conflicting and so nu-
merous. To examine these opinions in brief, to see
how they are refuted, to arrive at a final conclusion,
and thus to show that Kālidāsa is not a myth, as is
thought by some, will be of interest to students of Ind-
ian languages.

The chief objections against his historical existence
are mainly two. Firstly: Some say that the very name
Kālidāsa - slave of Kālī - seems to suggest that it is the
pseudonym of some devotee of the goddess Kālī. This ob-
jection is easily answered; for, Kālidāsa can just as
well be a proper name, as the names Gopāla or Āditya,
which of themselves do not prove any particular de-
votion to the gods Kṛṣṇa or Śiva. But the many
fables handed down by tradition form perhaps
a more serious objection. In one of these, Kālidāsa
is said to have been an illiterate, foolish shepherd
till late in life, until one day he was found by the
minister of the kingdom who to vent his revenge on
his king for a wrong suffered at his hands, took the shep-
herd to the palace and married him off to the princess of
the realm. Soon the bridegroom's origin came to light and
was turned out of doors. He then went to the temple of the
goddess Kālī, and after a short conflict with her, swore that
he would be her slave. The goddess was pleased and gave
him superhuman wisdom. The opponents of Kālidāsa's
historicity say that if he were an historical

person, some more credible story ^{we} should have been spread about him. But it must be remembered that in early Hinduism the sense of the supernatural was so vivid, ^{and} religious feeling so strong, that there was a tendency to explain everything beautiful, everything out of the common ~~run~~ ^{of things}, by the special intervention of some deity ^{or other}. This is proved by any work in Sanskrit literature, more especially by the 'Kumārasambhava' and 'Raghuvamśa' of Kālidāsa. So, on account of the religious character on the one hand, and ^{the} incredibility on the other of the ~~tradition~~ ^{the story} itself, it is plain that ~~it is~~ ^{it is} nothing more than the pious creation of a later age, and therefore ^{forms} no objection to Kālidāsa's historical character.

There seem to be many more conflicting views about his date. Sometimes thoughtless fancy, poetic imagination or groundless fables take him to the 11th Century A. D., but others with great certainty assert that he can not ^{have existed} be later than ^{the first} 1st Century B. C. when the Vikramādityan era began. The supporters of the latter view allege that as their proof, a tradition which says that King Vikramāditya in his passion for poetry and music chose the best nine poets of his kingdom, known as the 'nine jewels', and that Kālidāsa was one of them. But the style of ^{the} classical Sanskrit which ^{Kālidāsa} he has used, his knowledge of astronomy, ^{the} his influence from Greece, the reference to the Itanās in his Raghuvamśa and lastly the unanimous voice of all non-Indian critics against this view show that ^{the} 1st Century B. C. is too early a date.

From the reference to the Itanās found in his

'Raghuvamśa' some conclude that the fifth century is the date of Kālidāsa. It may be that the poet had in mind some contemporary event when making this reference. Therefore, says Professor Patlak, this work must have been written between 450 and 455 A. D., a time when the Śūnas were enjoying perfect peace in the quiet home of the Oxus Valley. But, strange to say, from the same passage the celebrated Monmohan Chakravarti draws the conclusion that Kālidāsa wrote between 480 and 490 A. D. when the Śūnas were in Kashmir. He has reasons to think that the Śūnas were in Kashmir in the time of Kālidāsa, for there is mention in the same work of the saffron plant which grows only in Kashmir. The whole argument however appears to be weak and set up on a tottering basis. (If in the western world the name of the Śūnas was famous before the 3rd second century A. D., India too should have known this name long before Kālidāsa's time. To so famous a name the poet could refer without having before his eyes any of their conquests or fierce exploits. If poets are often led by their imagination to inaccuracies in natural history, it remains to be proved ^{why} that in mentioning the saffron plant alone Kālidāsa could not have made a mistake.) Therefore it is not improbable that Raghuvamśa was written before the Śūnas established themselves in the Oxus valley or in Kashmir.

The supporters of the next century seem to ^{be} more numerous. If the tradition of King Vikramāditya and the nine jewels has any historical value, Max Müller's proof that Varāhamihira, one of the jewels, belong to ^{sixth} this century, the sixth century, his conjecture that some others of the same jewels may be ^{of} the same century, Dr. Hoernle's theory of the identity between King Yaśodhan

All that we can reasonably infer from this pas-
sage is that Raghu, a King, who lived ^{many} Centuries
before Kalidasa, conquered a race as warlike as
the Hūmas. Besides, if Kalidasa wrote about
the 450 A. D, when the Gupta race, his stay and sup-
port was on the decline, he would not have mani-
fested that joy and contentment which pervades
the whole work. As for 490 A. D, there is no reason to
suppose that K the poet meant Kashmir and no
other place in mentioning the saffron plant -
poets, it is to be remembered, are often led by their
imagination into inaccuracies in natural history.

conqueror of the Skunas and Vikramāditya of the tradi-
tion, and Fergusson's opinion that the Vikrama era
began only in 544 A. D., when the Skunas were overthrown,
would all prove that Kalidasa lived in the ^{sixth} 6th Century.
But, the supposition that Kalidasa was one of the nine
jewels and hence that he is a contemporary of Varāha-
mihira, his attachment to the court of King Yasodhar-
man, and his existence in the beginning of the Vikra-
ma era, are based ^{merely} on a tradition which Professor
Keith with sufficient reason affirms to be weak and set
upon a tottering basis late and of uncertain prove-
nence. Besides Fergusson's hypothesis is unwarranted,
as it has been proved that the Vikrama era did exist be-
fore 544 A. D. These

There are others who support the same century
on different grounds. In Kalidasa's 'Meghadūtā' a
certain Dignāga is represented as the poet's enemy. A
Buddhist logician of the same name is supposed
to have lived in the beginning of the sixth century. This
leads Mallinātha, a critic, to think the logician to be
the poet's enemy, and from this to fix the date of
Kalidasa. But the logician's date itself is much dis-
cussed; and, besides, the enmity between the poet and
a logician appear almost incredible.

Similarly plausible seems the identity between the
poet's friend Kumāradāsa and a king of the same
name who ruled over Ceylon about 510 A. D. This view is
supported by a tradition which says that Kālidāsa went
to Ceylon, died there at the hands of a courtesan, and that
the King overwhelmed with grief caused his ^{own} side to be
burnt. But the tradition has been proved to be 'late,
unsupported by earliest evidence and totally without
value' (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1901) Thus,

His date stands on no basis and is therefore to be
lastly, according to a tradition in certain parts
of India, he is a contemporary of Bhoja, King of Dhara
in the eleventh century A. D. There is no one today to sup-
port this so manifestly improbable date, which Professor
Bernard Keith says 'is a fiction, fake and worthless'.

Thus, both tradition and contemporary works
of literature leave us in tantalizing ignorance of his date.
A conclusive proof is arrived at, not from any of these,
but from the astronomical knowledge of Kalidasa as
shown in his works. From his 'Raghuvamśa' and 'Ku-
mārasambhava' it is plain that he was familiar with
the judicial astrology of the west. In 'Vikramorvaśī' he
refers to a purely western conception, the figure of the
lion in the zodiac. In the same work he uses certain
technical terms such as 'vīca' and 'jāmitra' which
are evidently borrowed from Greek, e. g. $\gamma\alpha\mu\iota\tau\rho\varsigma$
(jāmitra) is from $\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\tau\rho\upsilon\varsigma$. ~~So much knowledge~~
~~could not be expected of an Indian before the year~~
~~350 A. D., for the history of Indian and foreign astrono-~~
~~my shows that Indian ^{astronomers came to know} these western~~
~~conceptions only after ^{950 A.D.} ~~his date~~.~~ Another evidence
which gives a nearer approximation of his date is
also from 'Vikramorvaśī'. There he says that midday
is the same as the sixth Kala. Kala. Now it is to be noted
that this system of dividing the daytime into twelve Kalas
is borrowed from the west — the word $\kappa\alpha\lambda\alpha$ ^(Kala) which means
time is used for its equivalent in Greek $\epsilon\omega\pi\alpha$. From this
clear expression of the same meaning of midday and
the sixth Kala, Professor Pathak rightly concludes that
Kalidasa wrote very soon after the introduction of this
new system of chronological division. This would place
Kalidasa in the Gupta era.

MY SACRIFICE AND YOURS

BY M. THEKAEKARA S.J.

The following is a liturgical play based on the Mass. It is not meant to be a dramatization of the Mass. The cast consists of a Leader, an old man Peter, an Angel, five small boys, Luigi, Benedict, Joseph, Martin, and Saul. The characters are all types; the Leader represents a priest; Peter and the Angel represent the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant respectively. The five boys stand for five different categories; Luigi is a rich child, Benedict is poor, Joseph is a stupid child, Martin is an untouchable, and Saul a wicked child.

(Note: These names have been chosen after five typical saints: St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Benedict ~~Joseph~~ Joseph Labre, St. Joseph Cupertino, Blessed Martin Porres, and St. Paul the Apostle. ✕

The play can be staged by an entirely female cast as well, in which case suitable girls' names should be chosen. The Leader should be a grown-up boy of a young man.)

Costumes should be simple, but sufficient to show the distinction of roles in the play. Thus Benedict would be in rags; Joseph would have his clothes dirty with inkstains and the like, and might carry a tattered dog-eared book, and so on. Luigi should be very richly attired. Joseph would preferably be dressed as an old man.

The choir remains invisible throughout the play, and sings from behind.

I PREPARATION

A LONG table to represent an altar at back left of the stage on a raised platform, covered over with a long piece of cloth. Two candles unlighted on the altar. No missal or crucifix. A few chairs and kneeling stools here and there on the stage.

Enters Leader dressed in alb and cincture. Peter follows.

LEADER: ~~ixwixixg~~ In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,

I will go in unto the altar of ~~the~~ God.

(Advances to the foot of the altar.)

PETER: (Turning to the ~~audience~~ altar) Unto God who gives joy to my youth.

LEADER: (Turning to the audience)

Brethren, you are welcome, every one,

For your sacrifice and mine.

PETER: Priest of the high God, ~~ei~~

Who stand between heaven and earth,

To offer our sacrifice to God, to bring God's blessings to us,

I am every one, the repentant sinner, the soaring saint,

Through centuries I have grown old in God's Church;

I have seen the ~~orphan's~~ orphan's tears, the youth's high hopes.

I have felt the sinner's qualms, the saint's pure joys.

I speak for every one, I pray for every one.

Leave not my children in the cold,

Admit every one, reject no one.

LEADER: Children, you are welcome every one,

For your sacrifice and mine.

PETER: Have my children deserted me? Where are they?

LUIGI: (enters by right) I am a rich child. I can pay.

No place in the wide world is shut to me.

Can I come in here?

LEADER: Yes, you can. But wait a little.

You are not the first in God's holy house.

BEN-DICT: I am a poor child; I cannot pay.

No place in the wide world opens to me,
Except the broad highways and God's holy house.

Can I come in here - into this home of light and joy?

LEADER: Yes, my darling. (He guides the boy to a place near the altar. Luigi follows.)

JOSEPH: I am a stupid child. ~~The~~

The teacher tells me ~~xxx~~ I am a dunce.

LEADER: (Holding both the child's hands) What do you want, my dear?

JOSEPH: I like this place. May I.....?

LEADER: You know what you want, though you cannot speak.
God also knows; He reads the heart.
Come in here.

MARTIN: Master, ~~x~~ thy slave is an outcast, an untouchable.

I enter not where the kingly castes dwell.

I am of the fifth caste, close brother to animals:

Great lord, may I sit at the doorstep without,

And drink in the peace and joy of your home?

LEADER: Nay, child, I am not lord or master,

But your brother, and you are the dearest to my heart.

We are in God's house where there is no high and low.

Sit not ~~xxx~~ here but come in. (Martin hesitates.)

PETER: Come in, child; come in among your brothers.
(The two lead him in.)

SAUL: Hallo, what is the fun there?

(Leader approaches him and offers his hand.)

SAUL: I don't want your services, big bully.

I come in when I please, and go out when I please.

(He strides in and goes to the chair of Luigi and tries to push him out. To prevent fight Martin offers his chair.)

~~xxxx~~ MARTIN: Take my chair please; do not fight with him.

SAUL: The chair of a pariah! No, not for me.

BENEDICT: Take mine then. This is the best here.

SAUL: All right. Now you go and look for a some rat-hole.

(Saul pushes the chair to a place a far away from the others and sits with his face turned away from the altar. Benedict brings for himself a chair from a corner of the stage.)

~~xxxxxxsingxxxx~~

LEADER: Lord have mercy on us.

PETER: Christ have mercy on us.

LEADER: Lord have mercy on us.

(Choir sings from behind the stage:)

CHOIR: Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. (Tune as at High Mass.)

JOSEPH: What is that? How nice!

PETER: The angels sing:

"Glory to God on the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

It is the angels' message that God is come to dwell among men.

(Angel appears on left, close to the altar. All stand except Saul)

ANGEL: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

CHOIR: (sings) Come, come, come to the manger,

Children come to the children's King.

Sing, sing, chorus of angels,

Stars of morning o'er Bethlehem sing:

He lies ~~in~~ mid the beasts of the stall

Who is Maker and Lord of us all.

The wintry wind blows cold and dreary-

See ~~He~~ weeps, the world is weary.

Lord, have pity and mercy on me.

(All except Saul approach the altar and genuflect.)

CURTAIN

II PRAYER

Two candles lit on the altar. Open missal on the epistle side. Near it stands the Leader, Peter and all the children, excepting Saul, stand in a semi-circle near the altar.

LEADER: ~~xxx~~ Oremus (Sings as at high Mass.)

JOSEPH: ~~xxxx~~ (To Peter) What does he say, good father?

PETER: He says, 'Let us pray.' So children,
Let us all genuflect. (All genuflect.)

LEADER: (turning) Rise up, children.

I am here to collect your prayers and offer them to God,
To speak the collected thoughts of all the Church.

Come forward, children, and make to God what prayers you wish.

LUIGI: I have everything ~~xxxx~~ I want. My parents are rich.

I do not know what to ask for.

LEADER: But ~~is~~ there not something which your parents cannot give?
Which only God can give?

If not for yourself, can you not pray for others?

LUIGI: Yes, for others; - for this poor child.

Make him happy, dear Jesus.

Make all poor children happy.

And for myself also I have to pray.

My heart is cold; I cannot love.

Make me love You, dear Jesus, and all the poor children for
Your sake.

JOSEPH: I cannot pray; ~~all~~ tell me I am so stupid.

Dear Jesus, make me remember my lessons.

Let me not get cross with people.

Let me not bully any one or feel jealous.

Make me happy like this poor child.

BENEDICT: Dear Jesus, I thank You because I am so happy.

Make my parents and all poor people happy too.

Some men are wicked; make them good.

Some men are cruel; make them kind and just.

MARTIN: Thank You, dear Jesus, for letting me in here.

In Your house I feel so at home.

Bless my people who are groping in the dark.

There are millions and millions of them.

They do not know You; and their fellowmen do not know them.

Pity their sufferings. Pour light on their darkness.

Bring them all to You; with You alone they can find comfort.

PETER: Lord Jesus, I pray for every one.

Dry the tears of the widow and the orphan.

Pour balm into the open wounds of sorrow.

Spread the oil of gladness on the weary world.

Implant justice and charity among peoples and nations.

Strengthen with blessings our holy Father the Pope,

Our Lords the Bishops, all clergy and laity,

And all those that work for Thy Kingdom.

Raise up saints and apostles to lead our land from darkness
to the saving light of Thy truth.

LEADER: Children, have you all offered your prayers?

LUIGI: No, not all. (Pointing to Saul)

He is there sitting apart sullen and gloomy.

LEADER: The cup of our joy is not full,

The rent in our garment is not mended,

The wound in our heart is not healed,

The hymn of our chorus lacks harmony,

So long as there is a single branch cut off ~~xxxx~~
from the true vine.

Children, pray for all the sinners of the world.

(CHOIR: Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo,

Ne in aeternum irascaris nobis.

LEADER: Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who savest all
& wouldst not that any should perish, look down upon those
souls who are deceived by the deceit of the devil, that

XXXXXXXX

they may be freed from the chains of sin for the praise and glory of Thy name.

ALL: Amen.

(Angel appears behind Saul. The boy closes his ears with both hands and stares on the ground.)

ANGEL: Brethren, your prayers are sweet.

In the odour of fragrance they ascend to God's high throne. Heaven's dew descends upon the dry soil.

(The boy looks uncomfortable, lets his hands down, shifts in his chair.)

ANGEL: May blossoms of virtue sprout where thorns abound.

CURTAIN

III OFFERING

2

Three altar cards on the altar. Candles lighted. Open missal on the gospel side. A vessel resembling a chalice in the middle, and near it a circular plate to serve as paten.

LEADER: Children, where are your gifts,
Tokens of your love and service, of your dedication?
Bring to God's altar all you are and have,
Whether rich or poor, plentiful or scanty, bring all.
X Bring with an overflowing love, with an eager heart.
Together we shall all offer our gifts to God.

LUIGI: (Stepping forward) I do not know what to give.
My toy car, my picture books, my stamp album?
The gilt frames in my room or my pretty leather purse?
Choose any, the costliest if you like.

ANGEL (Appears left, close to the altar.) Not the costliest.
God has no need for your gold.
But that which you love best,
That of which the giving is a great sacrifice.

LUIGI: What I love best? Yes, this prize book,
The only one I ever got for a school prize.
(Hesitates) No, I cannot give it.

ANGEL: (Sternly) You cannot?

LUIGI (After a pause) Yes, I can; I must give it. I will give it.
(Places it on the altar and returns to his place.)

JOSEPH: I can give nothing that will please anybody.
My copy books are full of mistakes.
The teacher says she hates to look at them.
The things I say or do are all so stupid;
Men who see or hear me laugh at me.
All I have to offer are the tears I have shed,
And this book X which is mine, which I cannot read.
(Places it on the altar.)

ANGEL: Child, you have spoken well,
And you have made a splendid gift.

MARTIN: Can I too give something?
All that my hands have touched are made unclean.

ANGEL: Poor child! For whom is it unclean?
For proud, stupid men who see the outside,
Not for God whose child you are, who caresses you in His arms.

MARTIN: Ah then, I will give this ball.
It is the only plaything I ever had.
(Places it on the altar.)

BENEDICT: I have nothing to give but these rags I wear.
ANGEL: You have a gift lovelier far than what the richest can give.
BENEDICT: What is it, good angel? - Yes, you told me.

It is the love of my heart - my desire to be all God's.
As a token of it, here is a little toy.

LEADER: A boy gave it to me once; and I love it dearly.
But for my God, I will give it away.
(Places it on the altar.)

LEADER: Children, have you all offered your gifts?

Is the altar filled with the tokens of your love?

Or has any one kept back something?

PETER: (Pointing to ~~the~~ Saul) There is that child, the sorrow of
my heart,

Is he still resisting grace that pleads for his soul?

When will his stubbornness cease?

When will he join the group of joyful givers?

(The other children move towards Saul.)

BENEDICT: Friend, will you not also join us in the offering?

JOSEPH: Brother, to give to God is the greatest joy of life.

LUIGI: It is the hour of the offering, and we wait for you.

MARTIN: All our gifts are on the altar; will yours alone be lacking?

SAUL: ~~Will you~~ (Angrily) Will you get away, all of you?

And this outcast, how dares he come here?

(Goes to hit him)

LUIGI: (Preventing him) Stay your hand; we are brothers here.

~~There is~~ No one is an outcast in God's house.

BENEDICT: Friend, soften your hard heart.

Make your offering along with the rest of us.

Deny not anything to God who gave you all.

SAUL: Must I too give? No, I will ~~not~~.

But they will think me miserly. Well, I shall.

And let my gift be the richest of all.

Here it is - my purse. Let me see ~~xx~~ who among you

Will make an offering as rich as that?

(Throws his purse on the altar.)

ANGEL: (Closing his eyes with his hands.)

Oh, sad, very sad. It is the richest,

Yet the poorest of all the offerings made today.

There is little love and much pride in that base heap of coins.

PETER: We have offered our gifts upon Thy altar, O Lord Jesus,

We have given our hearts to be united to Thine.

We have placed our small hosts along with Thy big host.

(Angel places a big host on the paten which the Leader holds in
in his hand. Each child places a small host on the same. * Saul
remains away.)

~~xxxxxx~~ PETER: Offer these, O Christ, our High Priest and Victim,
Through the hands of Thy servant, the priest at Thy altar,
To the Eternal Father, in the name of ~~us~~ all.

LEADER: (Turning to the altar and raising the paten)

Accept, O holy Father, almighty and eternal God,

These spotless hosts of our offerings,

For our innumerable sins, offences and negligences,

For all here present, for all living and dead.

ANGEL: The acceptable sacrifice ~~is~~ for mankind's sins

Is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Not bread alone but wine too is needed for the sacrifice.

LEADER: (Pours wine into the chalice, and then a few drops of
water.)

PETER: Look, children; he pours some water into the wine.

Pray that the truth of which this is a symbol be realized in
our lives.

LEADER: These drops, O God, are mixed with the wine;

And the wine is to be changed into the Blood of the Sacrifice.

Grant, then, that we Thy servants share in Thy divinity,

As Thy Son became sharer in our humanity.

CHOIR: (sings)

Come, Come, come to the manger, etc...

He leaves all His glory behind,

To be born and to die for ~~mankind~~ mankind.

With grateful beasts His cradle chooses,

Thankless man His love refuses.

Lord have pity and mercy on me.

ANGEL ~~TAKES~~ (Takes the thurible and gives it to the Leader. * Each of
the children puts a spoonful of incense into it.)

LEADER: Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice rise to God as this fra-
grant incense.

(Leader turns to the altar and offers incense.)

PETER: May the Lord receive our sacrifice from your hands, for the
glory of His name, for the peace and prosperity of His Church,

* for the salvation of every one of us.

CURTAIN

IV SACRIFICE

* Missal, altar cards, chalice and paten, as in III. Three candles lit on either side. Several flower vases. No chairs except that on which Saul sits. Kneelers placed in a semi-circle round the altar.

CHOIR (Sings - tune as at high Mass.)

SOLO: Sursum Corda.

ALL: Habemus ad Dominum.

SOLO: Gratias agamus Domino Deo Nostro.

ALL: Dignum et justum est.

LEADER: Lift up your hearts.

PETER: We have lifted them to the Lord.

ANGEL: When you come for Mass,

You do not make your offerings, each one for himself.

PETER: No, we make our offerings all together,

It is the whole Church that offers ~~xxx~~ it through us.

ANGEL: The whole Church, and chiefly its head, Christ.

Your gifts are a token of your souls' surrender;

And these hosts and this wine represent your surrendered selves.

But these are not gifts of great value;

These are not the best sacrifices for God.

So Christ changes your gifts into Himself.

His Body and Blood are given to you

That you may offer them with Christ and through Christ,

To the eternal Father for your sakes.

PETER: What a priceless gift to be offered to God!

What a wonderful changing of our poor gifts!

The consecration at Mass is the greatest of miracles.

LEADER: Let us give thanks to God our Lord.

PETER: It is most fitting

LEADER: That at all times we give

Thanks to the Lord God, Father almighty,

Through Jesus Christ who became man for us,

PETER: He walked upon our earth, lived and conversed with men,

BENEDICT: He called to Himself all who labour and are afflicted

And promised to comfort all.

JOSEPH: He taught the people everything about the Father,

And the people crowded round Him to listen to Him.

LUIGI: Men left all they had for His sake,

And thought it great honour to be His followers.

MARTIN: He was especially the friend of little children.

He wanted them to come to Him.

He placed His hands upon their heads and blessed them.

(Saul looks disturbed. He rises up, and then sits down again,

closing his ~~xxx~~ ears.)

(Bell rings thrice.)

CHOIR: (Sings) Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

(Tune as at high Mass.)

L (Saul listens; slowly rises and comes forward.)

LEADER: On the day before He died,

Jesus took bread into His hands and blessed it,

And said: 'This is ~~My~~ My Body'.

Likewise over the wine in the chalice He said:

'This is My Blood.'

ANGEL: Bread and wine were then changed into the Body and
Blood of Jesus.

PETER: Likewise, when at Mass, the priest as another Christ,

Says these words over the ~~x~~ bread and wine, the same change

H takes place.

LEADER: Thus are our gifts transformed and made into a ~~xx~~ gift of

infinite value.

~~XXXXXXXX~~ SAUL: (To Luigi) Will my gift too be accepted to be offered to God?

LUIGI: Yes, if you give it with a great love.
(Bell rings once.)

ANGEL: Kneel down.

(All kneel, except ~~Luigi~~ Saul who quickly moves to a corner of the stage.)

ANGEL: When you go for Mass,

You must remember all that Christ did for you
- Especially how He suffered and died.

(Angel draws a veil revealing a great crucifix behind the altar.)

ALL: My Lord and my God.

(Saul looks troubled - begins to approach hesitantly towards the altar, withdrawing now and then.)

LEADER: My Lord and my God who suffered the agony of the garden,
Who wert siezed and dragged before tribunals,

ALL: We adore Thee, O Christ.

LEADER: Who wert stripped and scourged, and crowned with thorns,
Who wert mocked and spat upon, and condemned to death,

ALL: We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

LEADER: Who wert loaded with the cross and led to Calvary,
Who wert crucified between two thieves and died after three
hours of agony.

ALL: By Thy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

LEADER: Who rose again from the dead after three days,

Who didst gloriously ascend to heaven, and sittest at the right
hand of the Father.

(All rise. Saul has by this time joined the others near the altar.
He kneels down in the middle, a little behind the others, and
says in a voice broken with sorrow;)

SAUL: I adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee, because by Thy holy
cross Thou hast redeemed the world. ~~✠~~
Thou hast redeemed ~~by~~ me. Pardon and save me, Lord.

LEADER: Receive, O God, from our midst today
The first-fruits of Christ's victory. ~~✠~~
Sin is conquered; grace has triumphed.

ANGEL: There shall be rejoicing in heaven due to one sinner doing
penance.

PETER: The broken branch is regrafted to the vine.
The straying sheep has joined the fold again.
The prodigal has returned to his father's house.
O God, all thy children, gathered in one,
Shall together raise our prayer and praise to Thee,
Through Christ our Lord. (All kneel.)

LEADER: Through Him, and with Him and in Him is to Thee, God the
Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honour and
glory, world without end.

ALL: Amen. (Bell rings once. All rise, as choir begins the hymn.)

CHOIR: (sings) Holy God, we praise Thy name,
Lord of all, we bow before Thee.
All on earth Thy sceptre claim;
All in heaven above adore Thee.
Infinite Thy vast domain,
Everlasting is Thy name.

(Instead of the above hymn, the first verse of the Madras
Eucharistic hymn "Oh Thou who through creation..." may be sung.)

CURTAIN.

V LIVE THE MASS

Altar as in IV. Behind the altar instead of Crucifix, a statue
of Christ risen, if available; or else of Christ King or the Sacred

Heart. The stage is profusely decorated with flowers and hangings especially near the statue. When curtain rises only Leader and Peter are seen on the stage. Angel enters; and after him the children. The children are ~~all~~ dressed ~~as~~ all in the same way, as on first Communion day, with flowers and decorated candles. They take their stand on either side of the altar.

ANGEL: Remember what follows the Consecration in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

PETER: Communion.

ANGEL: Communion is Christ's gift-giving to you.
In the offertory you offer your gifts and yourselves.
In the consecration Christ transforms your gifts.
He offers Himself to the Father in your name.
And along with Him He offers the whole Church,
The mystical body of Christ, every one of you.
~~xxxxxxx~~ Communion is God's gift-giving to you;
It is the seal of your sacrifice, the sign of its acceptance.

LEADER: Behold, the Lamb of God;

Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.

PETER: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter my roof.
Say but the word and my soul shall be healed.

LEADER: Brethren, when we receive Communion,

We all sit at the same table; we partake of the same food.

Christ's Blood runs in our veins;

We are brothers of one another, as we are brothers of Christ.

Among Christians there is no high and low; there is
no rich and poor.

We must truly love one another;

Christ's peace must reign over us.

ANGEL: The Mass should be continued in your daily life.

The whole of your lives should be a thanksgiving.

In work and play, in study and in rest,

You must spread around you the fruits of Christ's gift-giving,

You must diffuse Christ's love, and Christ's peace.

Will you be Christ's apostles?

ALL: Yes, we will.

BENEDICT: (Stepping forward)

Christ's Kingdom shall triumph in our poverty.

Bethlehem's crib and Calvary's cross shall ~~xxxx~~ show us the way,

Away from habits of vice ~~x~~ or hatred of class,

Towards sacrifice and love, patience and endurance,

Tireless industry, and lawful striving.

Christ's love shall transform the squalor of our slums;

In depths of misery we shall be Christ-bearers, Christ's
apostles.

LUIGI (Stepping forward)

In wealth and ~~xxxxxxx~~ pomp Christ's love shall shine;

In rank and splendour Christ's humility shall triumph.

Justice and charity shall be twin lamps to our steps.

None shall defraud the workmen of their wages;

None shall oppress the poor in their misery.

Teach us, O Lord, to give of our best for Thy cause,

- For the extension of Thy Kingdom on this earth,

For the righting of wrong, for the succour of the poor,

For the conquering reign of universal love.

MARTIN: (Stepping forward)

Christ's power shall strengthen our weakness;

Christ's majesty shall ennoble our lowliness.

The light of the Gospel shall shine pure and bright,

To dispel mists of darkness and prejudice,

To teach us the dignity of our person, the grandeur of our des-
tiny, tiny.

With conduct straight, with souls unblemished,

We shall sing Thy praise in the corrupting world.

MARIKX JOSEPH: (Stepping forward)

The message of Christ's Gospel shall teach our ~~ing~~ ignorance;

God's truths shall lead us on to holy living and lasting

~~xxxxx~~ peace -

Truths that He has hidden from the wise and prudent,
And revealed to the little ones.

Humility and industry shall be our rule of life;
And the hope of heaven shall lighten all our trials.

SAUL: Our hearts are made for Thee, O God,
And they are restless until they rest in Thee.
The Mass shall teach us the way to repentance;
In God's sanctuary we shall find true peace -
That peace which I have found,
I shall show to others who like me wander far from Thee.
O my God, have mercy on all the sinners of the world;
Convert them; lead them back from the ways of sin.

LEADER: Children, you have spoken well your mind's resolve.
May God grant you strength to carry out your desires.
Every Christian is an apostle,
The apostolate is the Mass lived through the day;
It is ~~xxx~~ our true thanksgiving after Communion.

(Stepping back nearer to the altar)

Go then, the Mass is over.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR: (sings)

SOLO: Ite Missa est.

ALL: Deo gratias. (Tune as at high Mass.)

Curtain drops. Choir sings:

Rise India, thy millions lead,
And follow Christ thy King;
From Com'rins point to Everest peak,
Christ's hymn of triumph sing.

(Followed by two or three verses)

As an alternative might be chosen the Eucharistic Congress
hymn:

O Thou, Who through Creation,
~~xxxx~~ Dost weave Thy perfect plan,
We sing hymn Thy Incarnation,
That brought Thee near to man!
But Lord, what exultation
Our minds today must fill,
For Transsubstantiation
Hath brought Thee nearer still.

(Followed by the chorus and the last verse.)